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PERMISSIBILITY OF NEWS PERSONALISATION IN VIEW OF THE FREEDOMS OF THOUGHT AND OPINION

Judith Vermeulen

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#NewsDNA, 'Promoting news diversity:

An interdisciplinary investigation into algorithmic design, personalisation and the public interest',

Ghent University Special Research Fund

news personalisation

permissibility in view of the freedoms of **thought** and **opinion**

NEW YORK TIMES PLANS TO INVEST HEAVILY IN AI TO IMPROVE PERSONALIZATION

Company intends to create personalized feeds to improve user engagement

How does the BBC use cookies?

Page updated: 8 October 2018

We use different types of cookies for different things, such as:

- Analysing how you use the BBC
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- Recognising when you've signed in
- Giving people outside the UK the international version of the BBC website (which has adverts).



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European Convention on Human Rights

Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union

American Convention on Human Rights

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

“Everyone has the right to freedom of **thought**, conscience and religion”

“Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold **opinions**”

Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union

“Everyone has the right to freedom of **thought** and expression”

“Everyone shall have the right to freedom of **thought**, conscience and religion”

“Everyone shall have the right to hold **opinions** without interference”

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

scope

overlap

interference
(first approach)

“thought”

anything one might think of
denotes the exercise of human
reason
development, holding, refinement,
change

“opinion”

political, scientific, historic, moral
or religious
result of a thought process
form and develop by way of
reasoning, hold, change

scope

“Freedom of thought contributes to the freedom of opinion in that opinions usually represent the result of thought process”

overlap

“Both rights have the same scope. The concepts of “thought” and “opinion” have a general meaning. They should be interpreted in an extensive manner”

“very close in meaning”

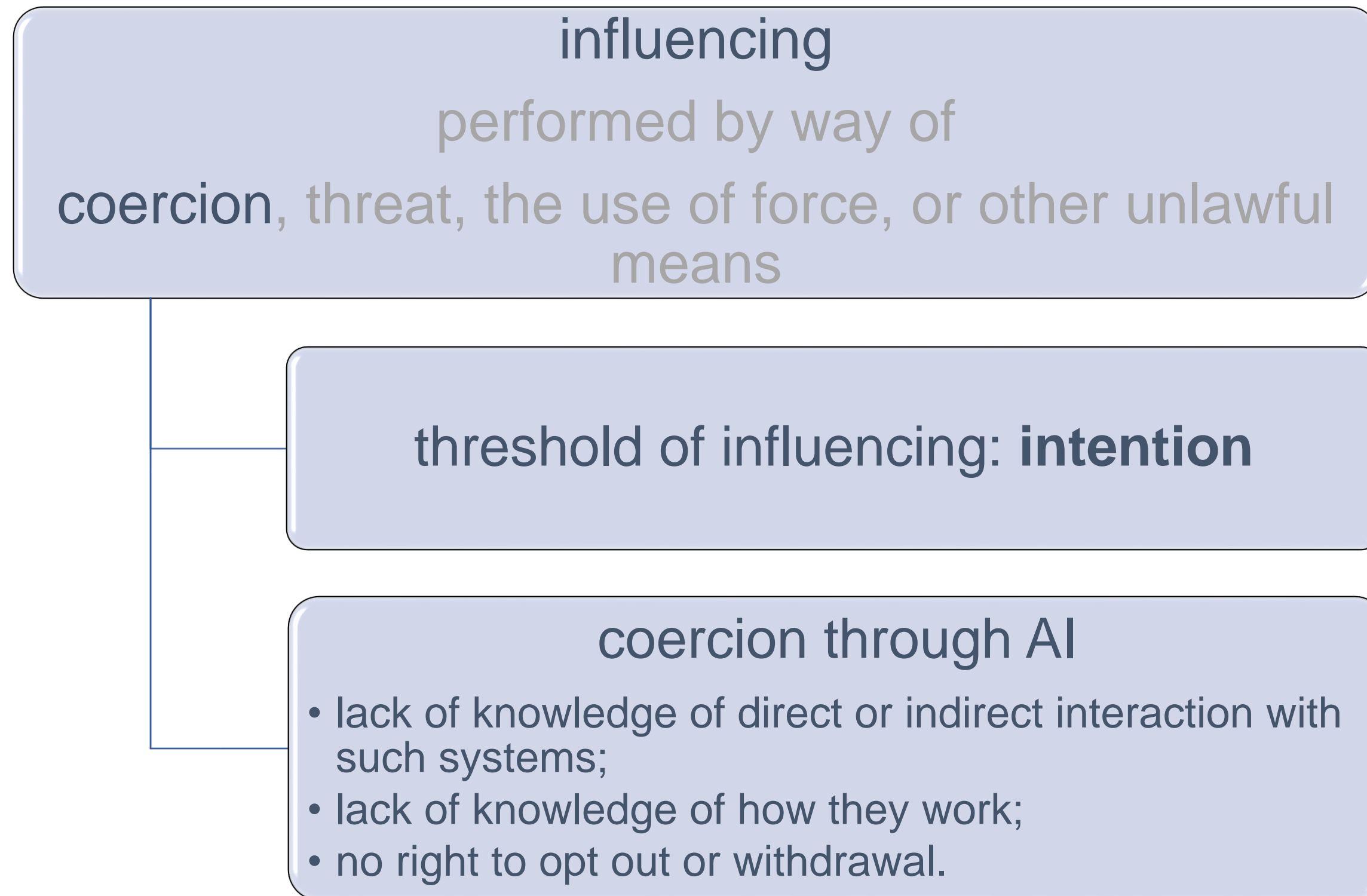
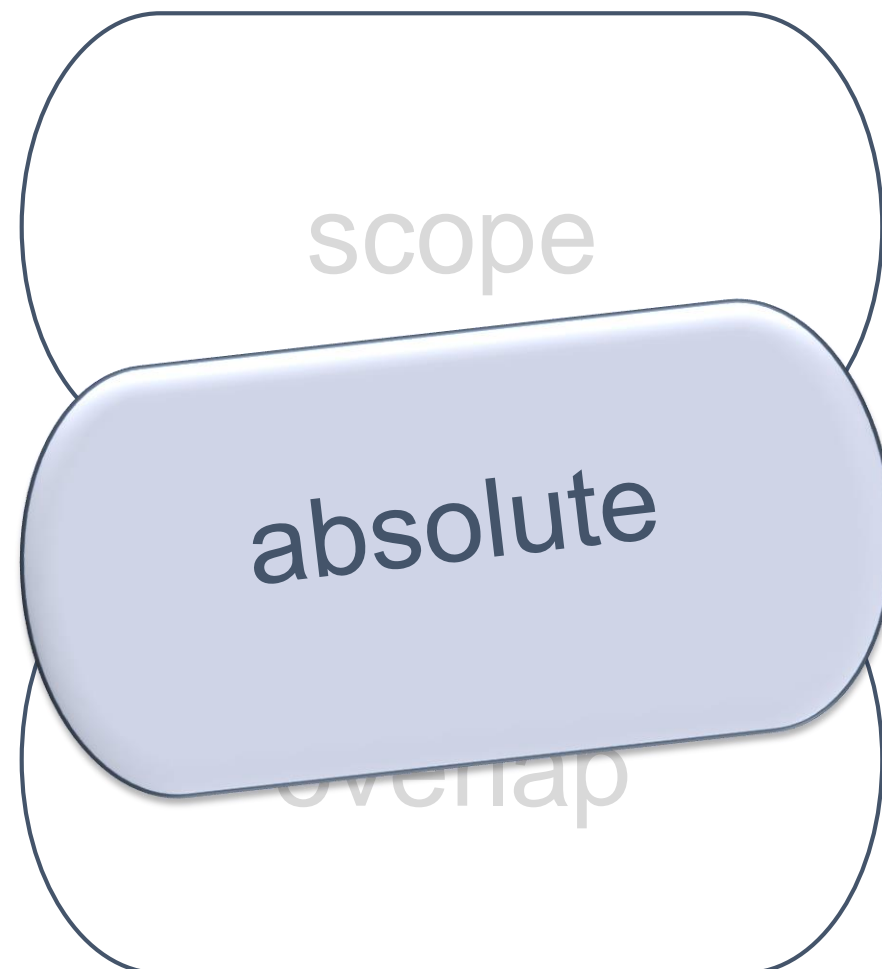
“Everyone has the right to freedom of thought and expression”

“not mutually exclusive but complementary to each other”

interference
(first approach)

“freedom to hold any opinions without interference is a truism and therefore superfluous”

“freedom of opinion should be distinguished from, yet at the same time is closely linked to, the freedom of thought [...] the expression of an opinion relates to secular and political matters rather than religious ones and the expression of a thought relates to religious matters rather than secular ones”



no
interference

daily influencing:
propaganda;
private advertising;
personal conversations or other impressions;
information disseminated by the *mass* media in our
digitalised society.

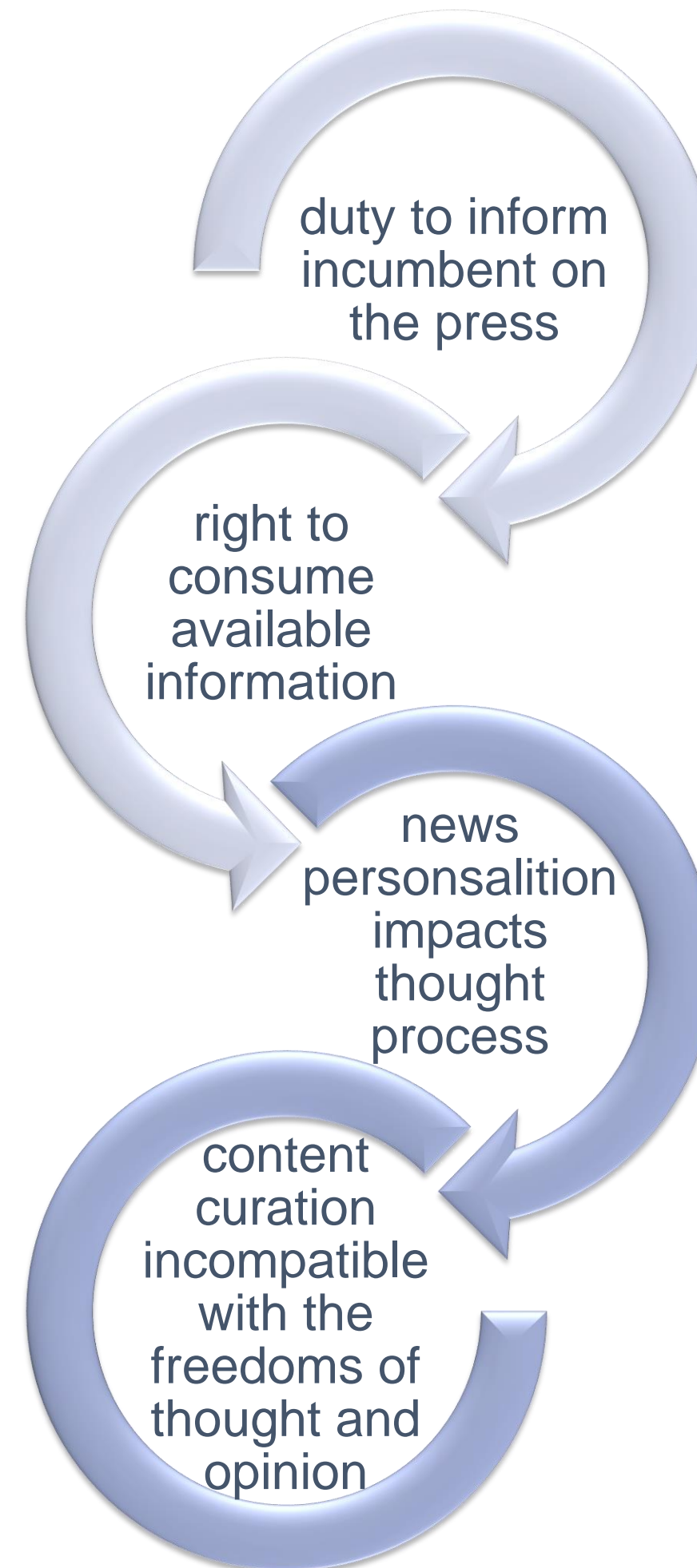
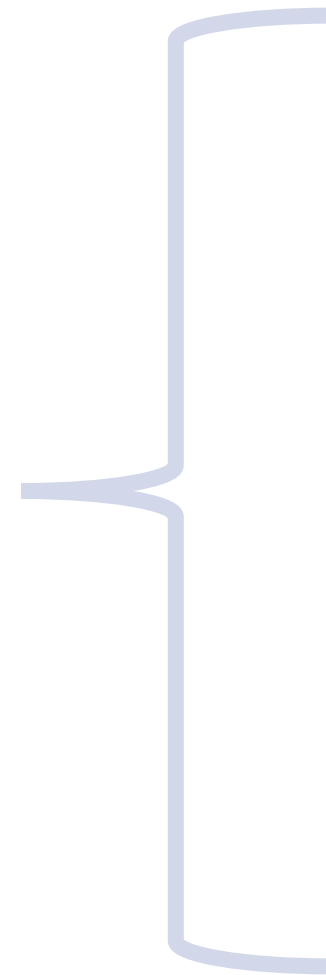
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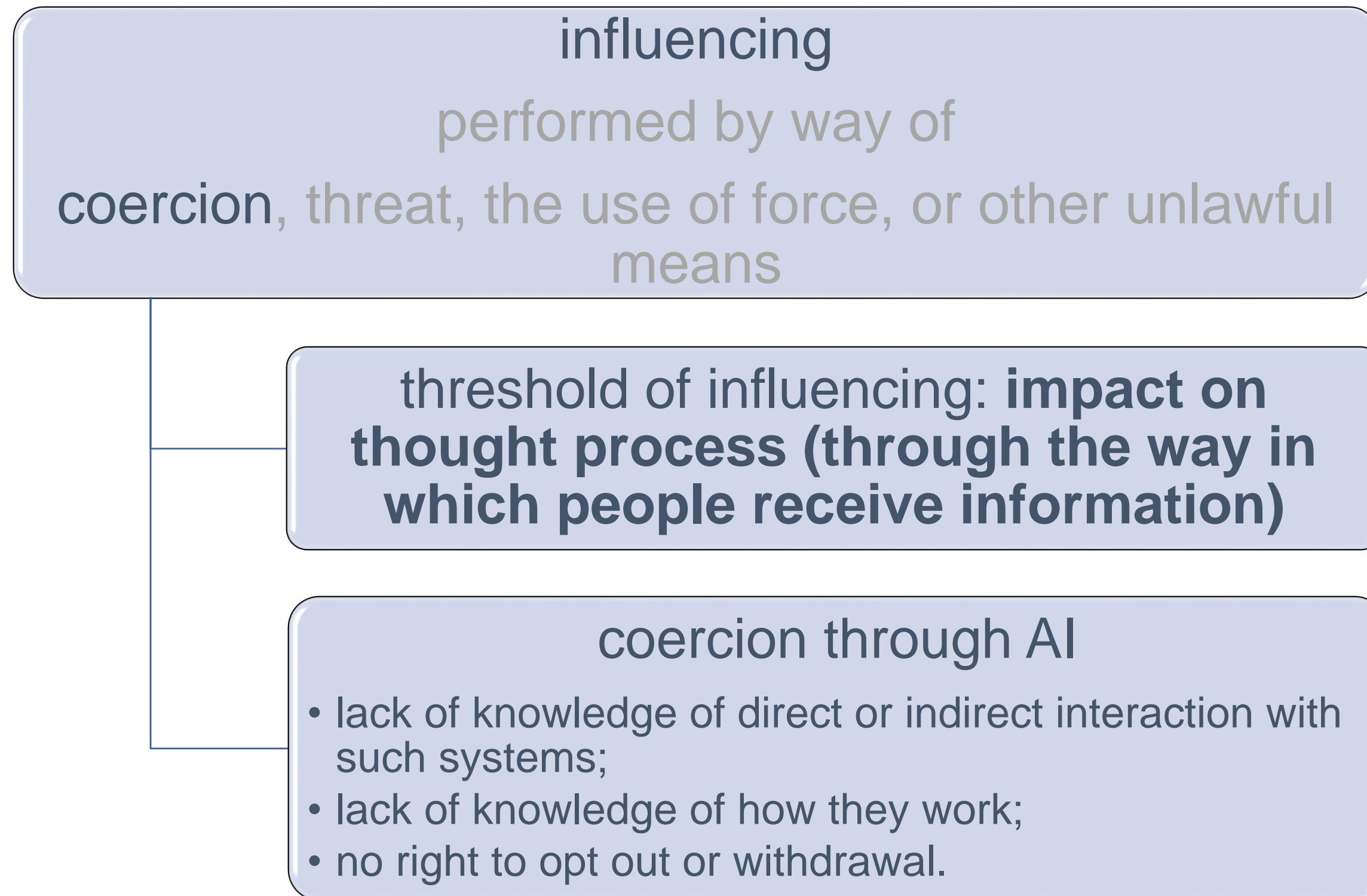
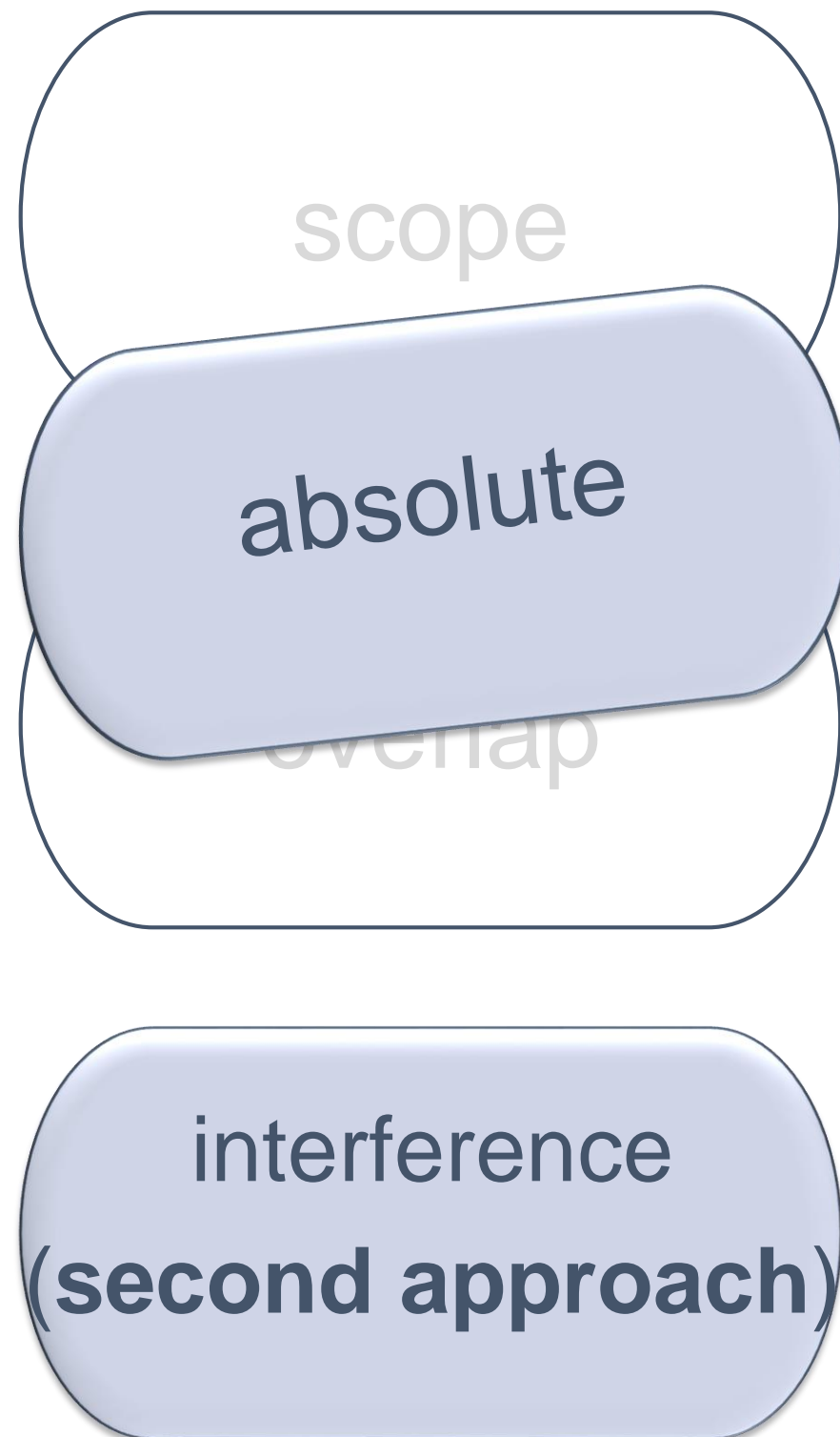
news
personalisation

interference
(first
approach)

indoctrination;
brainwashing;
influencing of the (sub)conscious mind with
psychoactive drugs/other means of manipulation;
re-education;
ideology conversion system.

content curation
incompatible with the
right to receive information





no
interference

daily influencing:
propaganda;
private advertising;
personal conversations or other impressions;
information disseminated by the *mass* media in our
digitalised society.

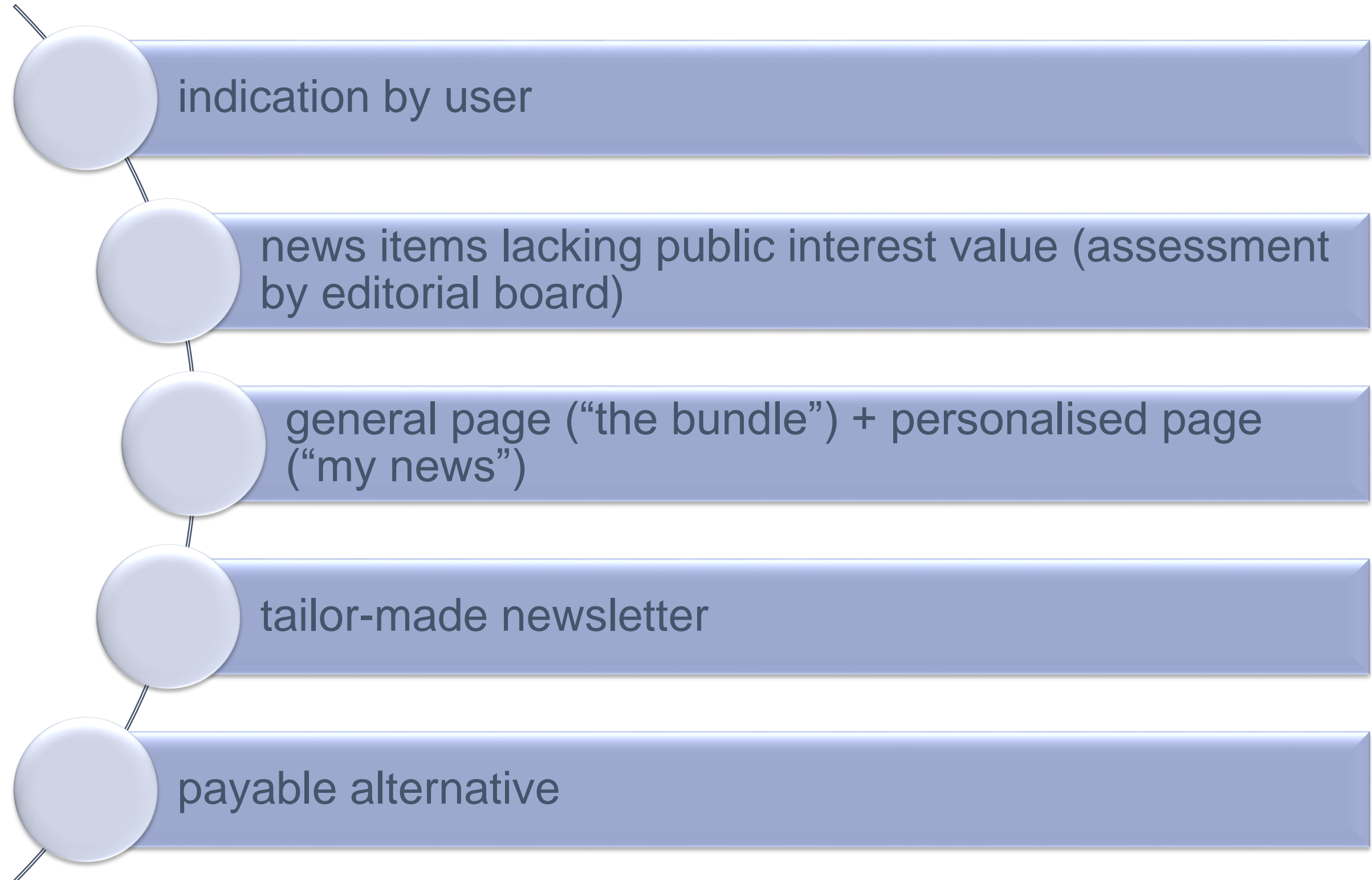
interference
(second
approach)

news
personalisation

interference
(first
approach)

indoctrination;
brainwashing;
influencing of the (sub)conscious mind with
psychoactive drugs/other means of manipulation;
re-education;
ideology conversion system.

compatible personalisation



takeaways ...

- ... two approaches to interference
- ... news personalisation impacts thought processes
- ... deployment by news media requires due care

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Law & Technology

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